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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC HEALTH IN ONTARIO

$200,000 Grant To Develop New School

KINGSTON - The McGuinty government is advancing educational opportunities for public health professionals by providing a $200,000 grant to Queen's University to plan for a new School of Public Health, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman announced today.

"We are committed to renewing Ontario's public health system," said Smitherman. "This planning grant is a great first step to increase graduate student programs in public health and strengthen our delivery of public health services throughout Ontario."

The planned school is intended to provide programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels in public health and related disciplines. It would also support community public health organizations and link with provincial, federal and international public health agencies and non-government organizations.

"This grant will help us pioneer a graduate school of public health in Ontario," said Dr. David Walker, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences. "We want to create a program that will foster considerable academic and research prospects for students and faculty."

The School of Public Health will focus on public health research, education, training and practice. In Canada, most public health teaching is carried out by departments within faculties of medicine or nursing.

"Today's investment is great news for our community health care partners and for future Queen's students who will pursue degree programs in public health," said John Gerretsen MPP for Kingston and The Islands. "I am pleased our government is making these funds available today."

"Queen's University is grateful for the government's support on this important initiative," said Karen R. Hitchcock, Principal and Vice-Chancellor. "This will allow us to move forward with enhancing our research, education and public service programs in public health."

This is just one more example of how, working together, Ontarians have achieved results in health care services in public health. Other initiatives include:

- Creating a new Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion to provide cutting edge research and scientific advice on public health;
- 36 public health units receiving more than $400 million in funding to provide mandatory and related programs in 2006;
- Funding 112 new infection control practitioners across the province.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for strengthening public health, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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